

## ORNITHOLOGICAL LITERATURE

LIFE IN AN AIR CASTLE. By Frank M. Chapman. D. Appleton-Century Co. New York, 1938. Pp. 1-250. Pls. I-XXXI. Price, \$3.00.

Dr. Chapman here continues the record of his observations and experiences on Barro Colorado, the first instalment being given in his "My Tropical Air Castle". The present book deals with birds in part, but also relates experiences with a few mammals, and one chapter deals with a tree. Perhaps the most interesting chapter in the book is the one on the Turkey Vulture, or Buzzard. Here Dr. Chapman reverts to the old controversy on whether the vulture locates its food through the sense of sight or the sense of smell, and takes the latter view. He set up several experiments to test the birds in this behavior, and called them, for example, the Empty-house Test and Box-on-the-hill Test. From the results he reached the conclusion that the birds depended on the scuse of smell in locating food, thus taking a view contrary to what we would consider the current opinion. Apparently, this controversy, which began with Audubon, has not been closed.

The book closes with a chapter on "The Past and Present" of the Barro Colorado Island and Laboratory, with many interesting bits of history and reflections. We notice that the last line on page 202 is, apparently, misplaced—an error in proof reading which is seldom found in an Appleton book. And on page 85 occurs the line: "The movements of their head seem independent of those of their body". But only a hyper-critic will notice such things. The undoubted verdict will be that the book is good reading for those who are in the least interested in outdoor life.—T. C. S.

THE LOG OF Tanager HILL. By Marie Andrews Commons. Baltimore, 1938. Price, \$2.50.

This volume will stand as a memorial to Frank Watkin Commons and his work in banding birds in Minnesota. Mrs. Commons, the author, was equally interested in the progress of the work upon which the book is based. In looking over the book several things are impressed upon the mind: a) the care and accuracy with which observations were made and recorded, especially considering the fact that the workers would be classified as amateurs; b) the wonderful opportunity in bird banding work for yielding relaxation and great pleasure to the man of the business world.

The bird banding work at the Tanager Hill Station was carried on for eight years (1923-1930, inclusive). The experiences of these bird banders from day to day are recorded in narrative form, and will be readable to bird banders as well as to many who may not be banders. At the close of the narrative the banding results in twenty-six species are summarized. And twenty-eight tables give the dates of banding and returns for as many species. The book contains a goodly number of original illustrations from photographs. A pocket map enables the reader to visualize the text descriptions. So we have here a noteworthy addition to the growing literature of bird banding lore.—T. C. S.

THE NATURAL HISTORY OF MAGPIES. By Jean Linsdale. Pac. Coast Avifauna No. 25, pp. 1-234. Cooper Ornith. Club, Berkeley, Calif., 1937.

This publication adds another to the growing list of monographic studies, since it treats both the taxonomy and the natural history, and gives a review of